



Alert: New Round of IRS Imposter Calls Reported in Howard County

The Office of Consumer Protection has experienced a recent surge of reports from residents who have gotten telephone calls in which they are falsely told that they will be sued for back taxes. During the first three weeks of July, the Office received over 30 reports of this scam.

Some residents received voice mail messages while others report answering calls from someone claiming to be “an agent” of the IRS or Treasury Department who says that this is the resident’s last chance to pay back taxes before being criminally prosecuted. Residents are told that to avoid prosecution they must send their payment – usually thousands of dollars – by wire transfer to a designated person.

While no Howard County residents have reported having lost money to the scam, residents should be on guard for this and other types of “imposter” scams. Remember:

- The IRS never contacts people about unpaid taxes by phone or e-mail. Even letters that appear to be from the IRS may be forgeries. Before paying money, make sure that any type of communication you receive is really from the IRS.
- Don’t be pressured into sending money immediately to someone you don’t know for any reason. Take your time to verify who callers are and whether their claims are true. Imposters succeed by getting you to pay before you have time to think.
- It is now illegal for telemarketers to ask for payment by cash-to-cash wire transfers or to ask for you to purchase a “cash reload card” and supply the PIN.
- It’s also illegal to ask for your bank account information for payment through a “remotely created check” that you never see or sign. Anyone who asks you to pay this way is breaking the law.
- If you owe, or think you might owe, federal taxes, call the IRS at 800-829-1040 or go to www.irs.gov.

If you are unsure if a call you receive is a scam, or if you have questions about this or other consumer issues, contact The Office of Consumer Protection by calling 410-313-6420 or by email at consumer@howardcountymd.gov.

To get this factsheet in an alternative format, contact the Office of Consumer Protection